

DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FRANKS of Arizona addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PRECEDENT AND THE CENSURE MOTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, it's been an interesting day here on the floor. And as always, an honor to have a chance to speak here. What we have just witnessed was not a pleasant event. It was terribly sad. It's tragic when anybody in Congress, especially a leader, a chairman, is found to have engaged in conduct inappropriate to such a degree as a Member of Congress, particularly as the chairman of the Tax Code-writing committee.

We have heard some things that were a little bit surprising. I heard Chairman RANGEL say there was no self-enrichment. I heard people talk about the lack of precedent for something like this, to have such a horrible sentence as to have to stand before the Speaker and be told to pay the taxes that were actually due and owing, or should have been paid previously when they were due and owing, and how horrible that was. So a little surprising that I would hear a fellow colleague make a comparison to the death penalty and life in prison.

I have had the unenjoyable responsibility to sentence people to death before and to life in prison. And I would daresay you could bring back those sentenced to life—you couldn't bring back those sentenced to death where it's been carried out—but they would not agree that standing before the Speaker and being told to pay the taxes that you didn't pay back when you should have was anything equivalent and fair to be compared with a life sentence in prison.

With regard to precedent, all kinds of precedents come back to mind, all types of displays of integrity. We heard people say across the aisle that because

someone conducted themselves in such a heroic and noble fashion in war that they deserve to be left alone and to be honored, and in fact apparently deserving of a standing ovation for failing to comply with the laws that he himself helped create.

Precedent? You want to know precedent in this country? You can go down the Hall from this Chamber and go to the rotunda and look around and see massive paintings that evidence precedent. You see 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence who pledged their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor. And they didn't withhold any of those.

We are reminded of I believe it was Thomas Nelson, a signer of the Declaration, who pledged his life, his fortune, his sacred honor. I believe it was Nelson who, during the siege of Yorktown, had indicated that since the British officers were in his home, his home should be fired upon, that that was the British headquarters. The soldiers apparently responded that, sir, this is your home. He said, this is where the enemy is. Take out my home.

Precedent? People who pledged their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor, who lost family members, who lost everything, all for the sake of us having liberty and freedom some day. And say that we have not—it's okay to just flagrantly fail to abide by the laws that we ourselves create.

Precedent? There is the big mural of Washington standing there with a piece of paper in his hand. And people file by that by the thousands every day and don't really understand the precedent that that established.

Precedent? I will tell you precedent. George Washington was made commander of the Revolutionary military. Many of the soldiers enlisted around the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, July of 1776, which means that their enlistment was to be completed in January of 1777. Most of that time was spent in retreat in front of vastly superior British forces.

December 24, things were so desperate Washington talked to his generals, and he believed they should move across the Delaware. Even with all the ice, even with so many of his men not equipped, many without shoes, they should travel across the Delaware and engage the most feared mercenaries in the world. His generals said there is ice in the river. We could lose the entire revolution if we do this. Washington said if we don't have a victory, it's going to be lost anyway.

He himself came up with the challenge words. If a soldier was to be challenged that night, "Halt, who goes there?" The challenge words that would allow the challenger to know that this was an American would be, "Victory or death." It was that important.

They traveled across the icy Delaware. And, no, George Washington

knew better to stand up in a boat, especially in an icy river. They caught the Hessians off guard and routed them, took them prisoner. Some were killed.

□ 1830

It was a major victory. But many of the American soldiers felt like they were not going to reenlist when their time was up.

On December 27, 1776, the Continental Congress did the unthinkable. They were seeking a democratic republic where people would govern themselves, and yet they passed a law to give Washington basically all the power, all the financial power he needed to win the war. Do whatever you need, pay whatever you've got to pay, because the Continental Congress knew that, if these guys didn't reenlist, they were all dead. Their families would be dead. They would be dead. Everything would be gone. Everything they had worked for in their lives would be gone.

But they had pledged their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor, and here they put them in the hands of one man. They sent a cover letter with a copy of the bill to Washington, in essence, explaining that we are giving you all this power, but because we know you, and we know your absolute integrity, that when you have no further need of this power you will give it back.

Precedent? That was a precedent. No man has ever been given that kind of power in the United States' history. Paulson came close with his Wall Street buddy bailout that he was able to wrangle. But they knew Washington. There was a precedent.

He didn't get the copy of the bill in the letter until the men either had to reenlist or go home. Washington urged them to reenlist, and virtually no one did. He made a second plea, not knowing he had the power to raise their salaries. And his plea was so heartfelt, because they knew this man's heart, that most of them reenlisted anyway. Then he later found out the power he had.

Precedent? The precedent came when George Washington won the Revolution and did what no man before or since has ever done. He did what's depicted in that picture where he is standing there with his resignation in his hand, and he says, symbolically, here is all the power back. I did what you asked with absolute integrity, and now I'm going home.

That's a precedent. That's incredible humility and integrity that we haven't seen around here in a long time. That's a precedent. Talk of precedent, during Chairman RANGEL's hearing. Compared to those kinds of precedents?

You know, when George Washington resigned, he had sent a resignation letter to the 13 Governors. And at the end of that resignation letter, and it was printed, circulated throughout the 13 States, he said, he ended with these words. What a precedent this is.

"I now make it my earnest prayer that God would have you, and the